

To the FCC,

I am a member at the Cambridge Community Television station concerned with the current proposal to allow telephone companies and other video service providers to skip seeking local agreements with cities and towns. This agreement would put community television channels such as CCTV in jeopardy of losing funding. The funding provided by these agreements is a trivial amount to a large phone or cable company, but allows for an enormous amount of opportunities for education, expression and community development at the local level.

I have been a member of CCTV for over a year, during which I've been able to take classes in video production, use of camcorder, lighting and sounds equipment, and digital editing, training I could not have afforded to receive otherwise. I have produced or worked on several short videos and am currently working on a short documentary on an issue that is very important to me – the environmental and social impacts of oil. Although I have been interested in this for many years, I did not have the training, access to equipment or the ambition to actually start this project until I joined a community television station. It has had a very positive, strengthening impact on my life.

An aspect of community television that I think is particularly important is the excellent job it does of bringing together a wide range of people. The people I have met and worked with since joining CCTV span all age groups – from kids to senior citizens. They come from different ethnic groups, speak 7 different languages, and have different abilities and economic backgrounds. In a large city such as Boston it is easy to get pigeonholed into interacting with narrow group of people, typically those with similar jobs, ages and backgrounds as you. Being a part of community television has given me a chance to meet people with very different lives than my own, and bring us together through a common interest in video production and self expression. It is the only part of my life that makes me truly feel like a member of a diverse community.

I think the benefits of community television to individuals and the community far exceeds the funding they receive from agreements such as those the current proposal would eliminate. Therefore I strongly oppose this proposal.

Sincerely,

Amy Mertl
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